

**STATEMENT BY MAYOR BOB YOUNG ON
SPECIAL GRAND JURY REPORT ON
AUGUSTA FIRE DEPARTMENT
July 12, 2002**

More than two years ago I echoed the call of the regular grand jury that a special grand jury be formed to investigate operations within this government. I was the first public official to make the request and have spent subsequent months and years publicly defending the work of special grand jury.

The grand jury process is an excellent management tool for this government to use to make it work better for the people of this city. The presentations already received and those yet to come serve as an independent view of what is working and not working within this government.

The grand jurors are ordinary citizens, called to perform a special task. The panel is made up of a cross section of this community, by race, sex and geography.

Their opinions count.

Over the past more than two years we have received a series of presentments from the jurors. Those presentments have included a number of recommendations, some of which the commission has acted on.

The jury's "citizens alert" prompted a number of unilateral actions on my part, including engaging the Justice Department and the Human Relations Commission to work on improving race relations in the city.

My state of the city address this year focused on bringing fundamental, but important, change to the way this government operates. I worked with the legislative delegation and the business community to help bring about that change.

Now we have a grand jury report that is a case study for that change - an out of control department head, aided and abetted by certain commissioners identified in that report.

The legislative delegation won't be back in session until January.

However, the city commission is still in session and can act, if six members have the will to make that change happen. Three of the commissioners went to Washington, DC and said Augusta was living in the 1960's. One of them said on television today he should have said we are living in the 1940's.

I intend to give them the opportunity to bring Augusta into the 21st century at our meeting on Tuesday, August 6th.

I have placed on the agenda an amendment to the ordinance outlining the powers of the city administrator. That change says simply that the administrator has the power to hire and fire the employees who work for him.

Had this change been in effect when Ronnie Few were fire chief here, he would never have dared to ignore and disobey the administrator, as the report says he did. It might have been more likely that the administrator would never have hired him in the first place.

Today, I'm asking the people of Augusta to join me in challenging the commissioners to embrace this change to the ordinance.

You can expect the race card to be played, but it is a losing hand this time around.

People are fed up with the sorry state of affairs in our government. They are fed up with commissioners who obstruct and thwart the progressive efforts of our city administrator.

We're losing jobs in the private sector and we're facing a 30 per cent property tax increase this fall to perpetuate this legacy.

Today, the commissioners are being challenged to show us just how progressive they want to be.

The amendment is on the August 6th commission agenda. I urge you to contact your commissioner in the coming weeks. Tell them you've had enough, and that they should vote for the ordinance.

It is the right thing to do.

Then, let's engage the legislative delegation to finish the work in Atlanta this fall. There is no time left for any further delays.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TITLE 1, CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY BY AMENDING SECTION 1-2-36 REGARDING THE DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR; TO PROVIDE SEVERABILITY; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY COMMISSION AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAME AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Augusta-Richmond County Code, Title 1, Chapter 2, Article 3, is hereby amended by striking section 1-2-36 in its entirety and substituting in lieu thereof the following:

§ 1-2-36. DUTIES.

The Administrator for Augusta-Richmond County shall be the administrative officer of Augusta-Richmond County and head of the administrative branch of Augusta-Richmond County government. The Administrator shall be responsible to the Mayor and Commission for the proper administration of all affairs of Augusta-Richmond County, and his duties shall be as follow:

- (a) To appoint or remove all Augusta department heads, subject to the right to appeal the proposed removal to the Augusta-Richmond County Commission, with the exception of the Augusta attorney, the Clerk of the Commission, the Equal Opportunity Officer, and the Internal Auditor, all of whom shall be appointed and discharged directly by the Commission;
- (b) Subject to the rules and regulations of the Commission, where applicable, the Administrator for Augusta-Richmond County shall be the appointing authority for all other Augusta-Richmond County employees whose appointment is now or hereinafter vested in the Commission, and shall have the right to employ and discharge the same;
- (c) To execute all lawful orders, directions, instructions, and all ordinances, resolutions and regulations adopted by the Commission consistent with this Code and entered upon the minutes of the Commission; in the execution of these matters, the Administrator shall keep the Mayor fully informed and shall coordinate with the Mayor to ensure that all laws, ordinances, and resolutions of Augusta-Richmond County are faithfully executed;
- (d) To have supervision over all departments or divisions of Augusta-Richmond County now or hereinafter subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission;
- (e) To attend all meetings of the Commission, with the right to take part in the discussion;
- (f) To prepare and to recommend salary scales for all employees;
- (g) To prescribe the duties and supervise the work of Augusta-Richmond County employees;
- (h) To require reports from heads of departments, and other employees trusted with administrative duties or exercising discretion;
- (i) To prepare and submit to the Mayor and Commission a proposed annual budget; when the budget has been prepared and adopted as provided by law by the Commission, it shall be the duty of the Administrator for Augusta-Richmond County to execute the budget; no department or office of Augusta-Richmond County government shall exceed the budget without the approval of the Commission;
- (j) To keep the Mayor and Commission fully advised on the financial conditions and future needs of

Augusta-Richmond County and shall make such recommendations on Augusta-Richmond County affairs as the Administrator deems necessary for the efficient operation of Augusta-Richmond County;

(k) To act as liaison between the Mayor and/or Commission and all Augusta-Richmond County department heads or employees of Augusta-Richmond County;

(l) To confer with and assist all other elected or appointed officials of Richmond County, and all departments, such as Augusta-Richmond County health department, the Augusta-Richmond County Department of Family and Children Services, whose missions are not under the direct control and supervision of the Commission, but who are dependent upon the appropriations of the Commission for their continued operation;

(m) To submit to the Mayor and Commission at the end of each fiscal year a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of Augusta-Richmond County for the preceding year;

(n) To see that all legislation, programs, regulations or plans promulgated and required by the state or federal government are duly carried out and complied with in accordance with such legislation, programs, regulations or plans;

(o) To perform such other duties as may be required of him by the Mayor and Commission.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Section 3. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 4. If any section, provision, or clause of any part of this Ordinance be declared invalid or unconstitutional, or if the provisions of any part of this Ordinance as applied to any particular situation or set of circumstances be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not be construed to affect portions of this Ordinance not so held to be invalid, or the application of this Ordinance to other circumstances not so held to be invalid. It is hereby declared as the intent that this Ordinance would have been adopted had such invalid portion not be included herein.

Duly adopted this _____ day of _____, 2002, and this _____ day of

_____, 2002.

Bob Young, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lena Bonner, Clerk

First Reading: _____

Second Reading: _____